

# CHACR *DIGEST* #1



## EDITORIAL LEADER

As events unfold in Ukraine we have been subjected to a bewildering barrage of views from every corner. No doubt, as professional service people or as professional analysts, we will all have been acutely interested and have been doing our best to keep up with the pace of information and opinion. The wise observers will have cast their nets widely to try to garner a range of 'truths' from which to make their own judgements. But the range of views is wide indeed. On our website the article '[Risk in Ukraine](#)' usefully sets the scene upon which this CHACR Digest expands. Thus, in this Digest, we have attempted to distil that range down to a selection of well-informed commentaries on the breadth of the issues that surround the Ukrainian intervention. As the tactical events unfold on the ground, reading this summary, and following the links therein, should provide readers with a pretty comprehensive overview to provide them with a well-informed context. And, at the end, there is a brief reminder that, Ukraine aside, important though it is, other events continue to unfold elsewhere.

– Maj Gen (Retd) Dr A R D Sharpe CBE, Director CHACR

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## THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT

As the war in Ukraine intensifies the consequences for global security are grave. The erosion of Western deterrence in the face of President Putin's decision to invade may not just be limited to European security. [In this piece](#), Hal Brands argues that the effects of the war will not just be contained to Ukraine, but have the potential to cause grave insecurity in exposed NATO countries



such as Lithuania, and Romania as Putin seeks to use his recently gained leverage to gain economic and strategic advantage. Furthermore the war is accentuating the ideological and geopolitical divisions at work in the world today. The past few days have already led to a tighter Sino-Russian alignment, and may well serve to strengthen the hands of autocrats who believe that now is the time to push on a weakened and divided Western security order.

## HARDWARE AND MILITARY ASSESSMENT

Before the outbreak of war two RUSI analysts, Dr Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds travelled to Ukraine to assess the strength of the Ukrainian Armed forces by embedding with them. In this remarkable [long read](#) the two analysts outline the preparations made by the Ukrainians in the face of impending attack, assessing the Ukrainian military's strengths and weaknesses. The paper then methodically outlines the ways in which Russia seeks to attain outright victory in Ukraine through four possible pathways, 1) Weaken Ukraine to accept federalisation 2) Pressure the West to accept Federalisation 3) Decapitate the State and install a puppet government 4) Total invasion and occupation.



## WHAT ABOUT SANCTIONS?

In the absence of a direct military response to Russia's invasion, European and Western states more broadly have been mulling over a range of sanctions packages and options, designed to isolate Russia and its banking infrastructure from foreign currency transactions, and isolating Russian held assets overseas. [In this analysis](#) by RUSI's Centre for Financial Crime and Security, Tom Keatinge and Oliver Kraft outline the range and scope of options available to the US, the EU and the UK, and discuss the impact of removing Russia from the SWIFT system.

## THE ENERGY AND COMMODITIES IMPLICATIONS

Central to the question of a unified European response, lies the importance of Russia as an energy provider to the continent. Numerous analyses point to Russia's leverage in the energy sector as a source of its power, giving it the ability to divide Europe and disrupt Western economies. With inflation already running at over 6% in most European economies, and energy prices rapidly increasing the impact on post-covid recovery could be severe. [In this analysis](#) the *Financial Times* looks at the ability of Western economies to recover from the additional shock of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and associated gas shortages noting that although most can ride out the storm inflation and high energy prices will remain higher for longer.



Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East, the war in Ukraine could have devastating second-order socio-economic effects. Together with Russia, Ukraine is one of the world's largest wheat producers, several key Middle Eastern countries buy a large portion of their wheat from Ukraine. For example, more than 50% of Egypt's wheat imports come from Ukraine (for Tunisia and Libya it is 40%). Disruptions in supply will lead to increased bread prices, putting pressure on governments to ramp up spending on subsidies or risk political instability. It must be noted that the 2011 Arab Uprisings were, to a substantial degree, driven by popular discontent related to rising cost of living costs. [This article](#) on NPR provides a useful overview of the subject, including links to more detailed studies.

## USEFUL BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Critical to understanding the events of the past month is Russia's perception of its place in both Europe and the wider geopolitical order. In [Russia's Perpetual Geopolitics: Putin Returns to the Historical Pattern](#), Stephen Kotkin notes that Russia has been a relatively weak power in global affairs but one that held lofty global ambitions. With the exception of three moments in history, (Peter the Great's victory over Charles XII and Sweden in the early 1700s, Alexander I's victory over Napoleon in the second decade of the nineteenth century, and Stalin's victory over Nazi Germany in the 1940s) Russia has been a relatively weak state that has struggled to project military power, or promote socio-economic development. As a result through a sense of national pride and desire to close the gap between East and West, Russia has tried to project power across its substantial borders, in a way that preserves its own security, and engenders a sense that Russia is rightly at the centre of world affairs.

Angela Stent argues in her recent essay [The Putin Doctrine: A Move on Ukraine Has Always Been Part of the Plan](#) that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been thirty years in the making. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the rebuilding of the global security order Putin has routinely complained that Russia's security concerns are ignored, and has repeatedly demanded that the West recognise Moscow's right to a sphere of privileged interests in the post-Soviet space. As Putin observes a fraying western order, and a weakened United States, he senses a time to prevent once and for all the creation of a world that enfeebles Russia, and seeks to create an environment in which Moscow is once again treated with the importance and centrality to global affairs that the Soviet Union once held.



## WIDER READING

Russia's invasion of Ukraine signals the return of great power competition/confrontation as the key foreign, defence and security political concern for the UK and its Western allies. Patrick Porter's [The False Promise of Liberal Order](#) looks at what has become of the world order created and often times imposed by the US over the past seventy years, while Rebecca Lissner and Mira Rapp-Hooper's [An Open World](#) offers a more optimistic take that the US – and with it its democratic allies – can yet prevail (John Ikenberry reviews both books in [Foreign Affairs](#)). Matthew Kroenig's [The Return of Great Power Rivalry](#) more explicitly argues that Western allies must prepare for a confrontation with both China and Russia (at the same time, as he argued in a recent, controversial [Foreign Policy](#) op-ed). For more historical background, Paul Kennedy's [The Rise and Fall of Great Powers](#) is a useful source.



**NEWS STORIES TO WATCH OUT FOR**

While Russia's war against Ukraine dominates the headlines, other key developments to look out for are:

A [conclusion](#) to negotiations to revive/renew a nuclear deal with Iran is imminent.

In Libya, the UN-brokered political process is on the brink of collapse as the country may again be [split](#) between two governments.

[North Korea](#) has resumed missile tests.

According to a [straw poll](#) at the Conservative Political Action Conference, a key date in the Republican political calendar, former US President Donald Trump remains the favourite to win the Republican nomination to again run for office in 2024.

France has [announced](#) that it will withdraw its forces from Mali and end its military operations in the country.

# COMING UP...

It has been a busy period for CHACR as we gear towards delivering a comprehensive schedule of events and research products ahead of the summer. Our latest releases include two additions to our *In-Depth Briefing* series, which explore the topics of international terrorism and use of Turkish drones in Ukraine, and *Risk in Ukraine* – a commentary penned by CHACR's director.

Work on a special edition of *Ares & Athena* – focusing on Russia – is underway and scheduled for release in April. Looking slightly further ahead, be sure to put a place-holder in your diary for 11 May, when we will be co-hosting the *Understanding Russia: Beginning of a New Era?* event at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Organised in partnership with US EUCOM's Russia Research Initiative, the day will feature insights from a number of world-respected experts and senior officials. In the interim, ensure you tune into our Interview series – the latest of which captures the thoughts of the UK's Defence Attaché in Moscow.

The eagle-eyed among you may have noted that the channels CHACR uses to communicate are being broadened and bolstered in a bid to further disseminate details of our research and events. LinkedIn [The Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research] and Instagram [@chacr\_camberley] accounts have been added to our Twitter feed [@CHACR\_Camberley] and the Centre's website is being redesigned to better host multimedia content. A refresh of our presence on Defence Connect, Teams and SharePoint is also planned. To be added to our directory and receive notification of all upcoming events, simply email your details to [info@chacr.org.uk](mailto:info@chacr.org.uk)

**CHACR COMMENTARY // MARCH 1, 2022**  
BY DR CHRISTOPHER DODD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## RISK IN UKRAINE

**"WAR, ALWAYS, AND ABOVE ALL ELSE, IS ABOUT WHAT GOES ON IN THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO CONTROL THE PRICES. THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO, OUTE LITERALLY, ARE CALLING THE SHOTS."**

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**IN-DEPTH BRIEFING // #24 // FEBRUARY 22**

## CAN TURKISH DRONES HELP UKRAINE? A MILITARY-STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

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**IN-DEPTH BRIEFING // #23 // FEBRUARY 22**

## THE STATE OF GLOBAL TERRORISM IN 2022

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